



STATE OF MARYLAND

## DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **MARYLAND OFFICIALS LAUNCH NEW STATE CANCER PLAN**

#### ***New Cancer Plan Enhances Partnerships and Builds on Maryland's Progress in Cancer Control***

**Baltimore, MD (July 26, 2011)** – The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) launched the new Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan at a press conference today at the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins. The Plan was written with broad input from a partnership of public and private stakeholders. Its purpose is to set forth measurable objectives and strategies to reduce the burden of cancer in Maryland.

"Maryland is committed to reducing the incidence and impact of cancer in our state," said DHMH Secretary Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein. "The Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan provides us a road map to achieve this goal."

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Maryland, responsible for nearly 1 in 4 Maryland deaths. In the past 25 years, Maryland has shown vast improvement in overall cancer mortality rates compared to national rates. Maryland currently has the 21<sup>st</sup> highest cancer mortality rate in the nation according to 2003-2007 United States Cancer Statistics. This represents a major improvement from when Maryland had the third highest cancer mortality rate in the nation in 1986-1990.

"Even though we have come a long way in improving outcomes, we can not be idle when so many continue to die from this disease, said DHMH Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services Frances Phillips. "This Plan will support even more progress by guiding improvements in the prevention, early detection, treatment and survivorship of cancer in the state."

One such survivor is Tamika Felder, who began her battle against cervical cancer ten years ago. Tamika's journey as a cancer survivor led her to create a nonprofit organization, Tamika and Friends, and to get involved with the Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan. Tamika's organization and others interested in reducing the burden of cancer in Maryland can use the Plan as part of a coordinated effort to control cancer in Maryland.

"I created Tamika and Friends so that others could learn about cervical cancer and how to prevent it," said Tamika. "Connecting my organization with others in Maryland through the Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan is a great way to work together so that more people can be cancer-free."

The Maryland State Council on Cancer Control, an advisory body appointed by the governor, is one of the stakeholder groups working on cancer control in Maryland.

"The Maryland State Council on Cancer Control is dedicated to continuing these efforts and working toward the implementation of this new Plan," said Kathy Helzlsouer, MD, MHS, Chair of the Maryland State Council on Cancer Control. "Given many shared risk factors between chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer, in this time of limited resources, it is more important than ever to collaborate across the state as we work to reduce the cancer burden in Maryland."

The Plan outlines a comprehensive vision for improving cancer control in Maryland and includes sections on Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Health Weight; Tobacco-Use Prevention and Cessation; Prevention and Early Detection of Skin, Colorectal, Breast, Prostate, Oral, and Cervical Cancers; Cancer Disparities; the Environment and Occupational Issues and Cancer; Cancer Surveillance; Patient Issues and Cancer Survivorship; Pain Management; and Palliative and Hospice Care. Within each chapter specific goals, objectives, and strategies serve as a guide for cancer control in Maryland.

The Maryland Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan and additional information on how to become involved in the Plan's implementation are available at <http://fha.maryland.gov/cancer/cancerplan/>.

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